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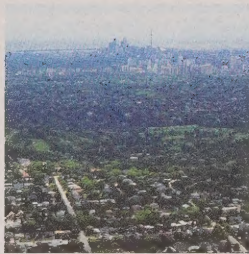
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Snapping Growth in the GTA

A Commentary Report

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Greater Toronto Coordinating Committee

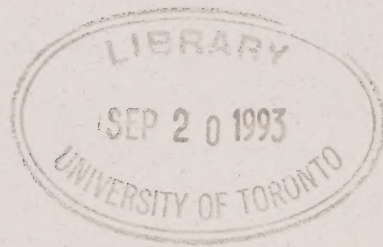


Table of Contents



FORWARD	3
1. THE GTA TODAY	6
2. NEW PERSPECTIVES ON URBAN GROWTH	9
3. MOVING FORWARD: THE SIX WORKING GROUP REPORTS	16
4. TOWARDS A STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN	47
5. FUTURE STEPS	56



Forward

This report – “*Shaping Growth in the GTA*” was commissioned by the Greater Toronto Area Co-ordinating Committee (GTCC) with the support of the Office for the Greater Toronto Area (OGTA).

The GTCC was established by the Province in April 1988. Its mandate is to improve cooperation, co-ordination and collaboration amongst the municipalities of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and the Province of Ontario. The GTCC includes the Chief Administrative Officers (CAO's) from Metro and the four regions in the GTA, as well as a senior appointed official from all thirty area municipalities in the GTA. The OGTA co-ordinates the Provincial government's policies and programs designed to ensure the GTA remains environmentally, socially and economically sustainable as it manages significant growth. The OGTA is a demonstration of the active involvement and leadership of the Province in the GTA.

In the fall of 1991, in cooperation with the municipalities, the Province established six provincial/municipal Working Groups. These Groups were asked to perform the following tasks:

- *to consolidate work that had already been done independently in various ministries, agencies and municipalities;*
- *to give advice on the attainability of the vision described in “GTA 2021: The Challenge of Our Future”; and,*
- *to suggest some next steps that could be taken to achieve the vision.*

The participants in the Working Groups included provincial and municipal staff as well as staff of various agencies such as Conservation Authorities and Social Planning Councils. They were chosen because they had considerable expertise in their fields. They contributed time and effort to enhance discussion around the serious challenges that confront the people who live in the GTA. The reports



which they prepared are not government policy nor are they necessarily the views of individual ministries or municipalities. In setting up the groups, the Province recognized that much more discussion and public debate would be required once the reports were completed, before policy directions could be agreed upon.

The reports of the six provincial/municipal groups were completed in the spring of 1992. After reviewing the detailed work that had been done by these six independent committees, the GTCC felt strongly that a commentary report was necessary to draw the six reports into a broader context and to reinforce the municipalities' conclusion that there was a need for greater cooperation across local municipal and regional boundaries, to ensure the cost-effective provision of municipal infrastructure. This report would provide a summary which would highlight the relationships between the working group reports. It would isolate the major issues which require discussion prior to decisions being made by all levels of government. Finally, it would move towards a collective understanding by municipalities and the public as to future actions.



"Shaping Growth in the GTA" has been prepared to meet these needs. It:

- *gives a brief history of the GTA, highlighting the efforts the municipalities and the Province have already taken to manage growth in the area;*
- *provides a summary of the reports that have already been published, and outlines both the consensus that has emerged and the Province's vision of a new urban form that is required to manage development in such a way that it minimizes sprawl, maximizes the use of infrastructure, protects the environment and enhances the social structure of communities;*
- *summarizes the six Working Group reports;*
- *provides independent commentaries on each which have been endorsed by the GTCC; and,*

- *summarizes and recommends a series of principles to guide future actions as the province and municipalities move to a strategy for managing growth in the GTA.*

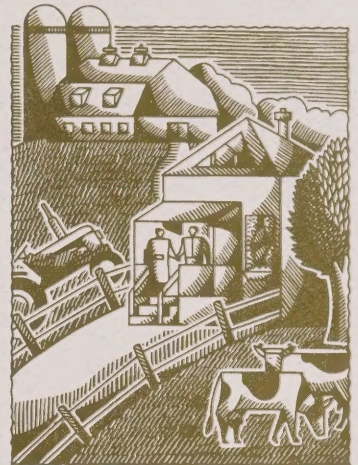
The final part of the report outlines the process that the Province has indicated it will use to develop a strategic action plan. This process is being discussed by the Province with Heads of Council, at Council meetings and with the GTCC.

The ideas contained in these reports and the questions that flow from them will form the basis of discussions at the five Regional Meetings being scheduled for the fall. We encourage all municipal councils, their staff and all those interested in managing growth in the GTA to carefully read and comment upon these reports.

The GTCC looks forward to continuing opportunities to provide advice to the government as this process evolves.

THE GREATER TORONTO CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

September 1992



The GTA Today

Chapter One

The Greater Toronto Area is defined as the area comprised of Metropolitan Toronto and the four surrounding Regional Municipalities of Durham, Halton, Peel and York. This area of some 7,200 square kilometres contains a total of thirty local area municipalities, and includes many different types of natural environments.

Functionally, the Greater Toronto Area is both the financial centre and the economic engine of Canada.

Traditionally known for its economic strength, the area has attracted workers from other parts of Canada and a large percentage of new settlers from other countries. Both as a result of natural increase and immigration, the population grew between 1981 and 1991 from 3,400,000 to 4,200,000, an increase of 24%. Current projections call for further growth to a population of almost 6 million by the year 2021. Of the total population increase of some 800,000, Metro Toronto grew by 138,000 while the Regional Municipalities grew by over 660,000, accounting for over three quarters of the growth.

These numbers indicate that most of the new development has been at the periphery of the urbanised areas. The pattern of recent growth has been one of low density development with large expanses of land devoted to single uses, whether residential areas, business parks, industrial areas, or

shopping malls. Frequently, large areas of residential development are also devoted to single types of residential use, particularly the single family, detached house. Industry and business have also suburbanised and the “post-industrial landscape” of low-rise corporate buildings, data processing centres, and single-level warehouses is now also found at the periphery.

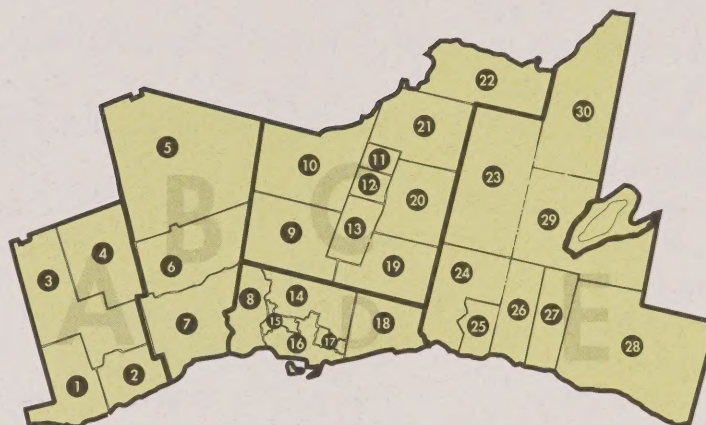
This growth has occurred in part based on an inherited structure. The towns and surrounding areas were originally laid out by surveyors in the early 1800's based on a system of rural concessions on a grid of varying dimensions. This concession grid, which became the basis for today's arterial grid remains the backbone of much of the road system in the region today. In the mid 19th century, the rail network was introduced, expanding out in a radial fashion to form the network which is now the basis of the GO system of commuter rail.

Superimposed on these earlier systems, a vast network of highways including the Queen Elizabeth Way,



the Don Valley Parkway and the 400 series of highways was created in recent decades and continues to be expanded. Most of the highways which are in existence today were originally conceived in the Superhighways Plan of 1943, which used Los Angeles as a prototype. By 1953, growth had spilled out considerably over the boundaries of the City of Toronto and the Province took a great step forward in creating Metropolitan Toronto, a new form of government intended to deal with the problems of coordinating infrastructure and financing growth in the City of Toronto and the newly created boroughs of North York, Scarborough, York, East York and Etobicoke.

As low density development continued to spread out rapidly beyond Metro Toronto, the Regional Municipalities of York, Peel, Halton and Durham, containing a total of 24 local municipalities were formed between 1971 and 1974. Development has not occurred uniformly throughout the Regional Municipalities. Much of the intensively developed land forms a linear band surrounding Metro Toronto and following the lakeshore corridor. Agricultural lands, and greenlands still account for almost 50% of the land mass of the GTA. This area contains smaller towns, villages, and hamlets, many which have not yet been touched by



sprawling development although they have fallen under considerable speculative pressures.

In recent years, significant amounts of countryside have been developed, as new growth took place mainly at the urban edge and development densities continued to fall. Such a dispersed pattern of development implies a high degree of reliance on the private automobile, use of which has been increasing faster than population growth. This pattern of urban growth has significant environmental implications, including disruption of natural systems and habitats, and increased air and water pollution. A strong emphasis will have to be placed on achieving more efficient urban form, to make better use of our land resources, to maximize existing infrastructure and costly services, and to minimize environmental and other impacts.

The social fabric of the GTA

Political Boundaries

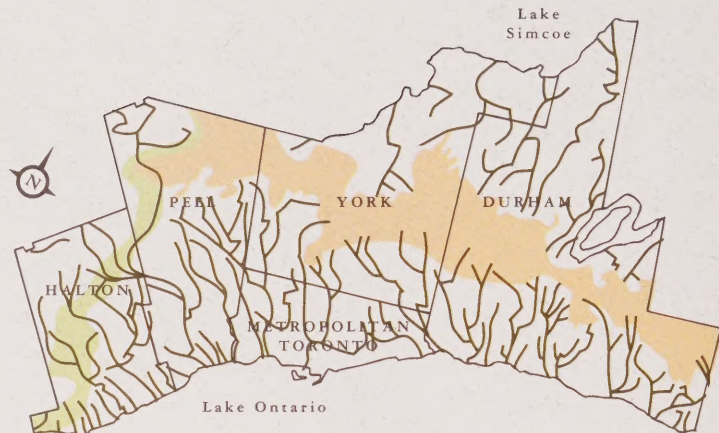
1. Burlington	21. East
2. Oakville	Gwillimbury
3. Milton	22. Georgina
4. Halton Hills	23. Uxbridge
5. Caledon	24. Pickering
6. Brampton	25. Ajax
7. Mississauga	26. Whitby
8. Etobicoke	27. Oshawa
9. Vaughan	28. Newcastle
10. King	29. Scugog
11. Newmarket	30. Brock
12. Aurora	
13. Richmond Hill	
14. North York	
15. York	
16. Toronto	A Halton Region
17. East York	B Peel Region
18. Scarborough	C York Region
19. Markham	D Metropolitan
20. Whitchurch- Stouffville	Toronto
	E Durham Region

continues to diversify, with 45% of all residents projected to be ethnic and racial minorities by 2001. This, along with an aging population, places different demands on the social, economic and transportation systems. Economic restructuring and the current recession have had severe impacts, with many enterprises downsizing, closing, relocating outside the core or even beyond the boundaries of the GTA. Municipal, provincial and federal governments have found themselves in very constrained financial situations, with increasing debt, declining revenues, and more expenditures required for social support.

Despite these fundamental changes the post-war pattern of building on the edges of cities has continued apparently unaffected by the changing circumstances. The dream of owning a house and a car in a low density suburban area remains and this form of housing is what continues to be offered and built, with few deviations.

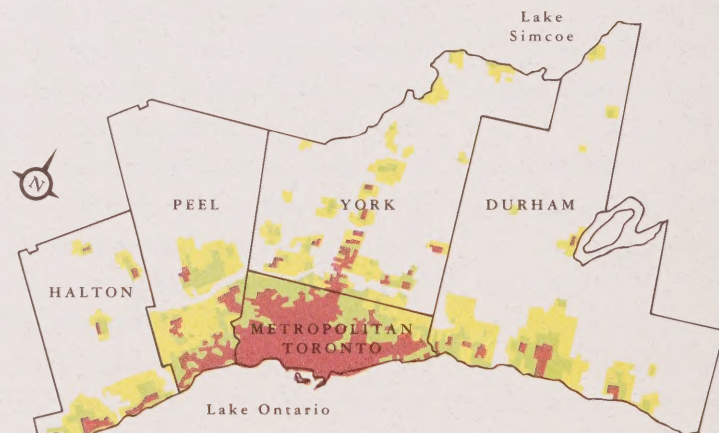
In short, the GTA is now more socially, politically, and physically diverse and complex than ever before while at the same time our financial resources are severely limited. Clarity, innovation, and bold moves will be required to come to terms with change in the GTA and to maintain a high quality of life for all.

The major natural features in the GTA include the Oak Ridges Moraine and the Niagara Escarpment.



Greenlands Concept

- Oak Ridges Moraine
- Niagara Escarpment
- Greenlands



Expansion of the Urbanized Area

- 1954
- 1975
- 1992

New Perspectives on Urban Growth

Chapter Two

A number of initiatives have been undertaken recently to begin to rethink our approach to urban development; and to adopt new approaches more in keeping with the current realities. Several recent studies have laid a foundation for this new thinking.

THE GREATER TORONTO AREA URBAN STRUCTURE CONCEPTS STUDY

To improve understanding of the issues and to stimulate discussion of alternative planning solutions, a "Greater Toronto Area Urban Structure Concepts Study" was commissioned by the G.T.C.C. in 1989. This study, conducted by a multi-disciplinary team headed by the IBI Group, compared three basic urban form concepts for future growth in the GTA. These were described as: 1) *spread*; 2) *central*; and 3) *nodal*. In examining these alternatives, the study analyzes infrastructure requirements, efficiency of services, costs and other quality of life indicators. The study concludes that while the costs of infrastructure may be similar for the three urban form options, the impact on the environment, the economy and the community is substantially different in each case, with the central and nodal options offering significant advantages.

For a variety of reasons, including a realistic assessment of the distribution

of growth throughout the GTA, a widely shared consensus emerged in response to this study that, in principle, some form of concentrated nodal development was preferred and closer cooperation among municipalities across the GTA was necessary. While it was acknowledged that some greenfields development would still occur, it was felt that it should be concentrated around existing or future nodes. However, further clarification of the definition of nodes and the amount of growth which will be permitted around existing urban areas was felt to be essential.

In parallel with this study process for the GTA, the Federal Government and the Province also initiated two other related studies which have examined the underlying assumptions and framework of the existing ways in which development is managed: the Crombie Commission and the Kanter Report. Now, a third study is under way by the Sewell Commission. While their subject areas differ, all three initiatives both reflect and have contributed to the growing emphasis on environmental quality, and have



Low density residential and industrial development is occurring at the fringe of the urban area.

had a powerful impact on the deliberations concerning the future of the GTA.

THE CROMBIE COMMISSION

In 1988, David Crombie was appointed by the Federal government to head the Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront. In 1989, in support of the work being done, he was appointed a Commissioner by the Province as well and his mandate expanded to include the entire Toronto watershed. In his examination of the waterfront, covered in three reports and culminating in the final report, *"Regeneration"*, Crombie has laid the groundwork and outlined a new approach to planning: an ecosystem approach. In his second interim report, *"Watershed"*, Crombie gives greater clarity to this concept:

"Simply put, an ecosystem is comprised of air, land, water, and living organisms, including humans, and the interactions among them. The concept has been applied to many types of interacting systems, including lakes, watersheds, cities and the biosphere.

Traditionally, human activities have been managed on a piecemeal basis, treating the economy separately from social issues or the environment. But the ecosystem concept holds that these are interrelated, that decisions made in one area affect all the others. To deal effectively with the environmental problems in any ecosystem requires a holistic or "ecosystem" approach to managing human activities..."

In *"Regeneration"*, Crombie lays out a very preliminary framework for an ecosystem approach which incorporates the establishment of criteria and a monitoring and



Such low density development has contributed to the current scale of the GTA.

evaluation system based on clearly stated Provincial goals and targets.

THE KANTER REPORT

In 1990, former MPP Ron Kanter completed a study titled: *"Options for a Greater Toronto Area Greenlands Strategy"* which identifies an integrated and linked GTA greenlands system and an approach which proposes to manage greenlands within a larger context, a vibrant, functioning and interconnected ecosystem. Again, this report reflects a fundamental shift in thinking away from a system of thought which considers economic, community and environmental issues in isolation towards the more comprehensive, holistic way of thinking which is

encapsulated in the term ecosystem approach. He states that:

"Greenlands" have traditionally been viewed primarily as public recreation parks. In recent years, however, a fundamental shift in thinking has been occurring. People are starting to consider greenlands as significant with respect to their own personal health and enjoyment as well as to the overall health of the environment. Many open space and natural areas serve as vital agents, ensuring the integrity and continuing existence of a balanced ecosystem.

THE SEWELL COMMISSION

In June 1991, a third study was initiated by the Province, the

- considerable support for some form of concentrated, nodal development within the urban envelope;
- a better balance between housing and employment;
- increased use of public transit;
- support for a new growth management strategy that continues economic and employment growth; and,
- a desire for strong provincial leadership within a partnership relationship with regional and area municipalities, including a rationalized funding process."

THE VISION

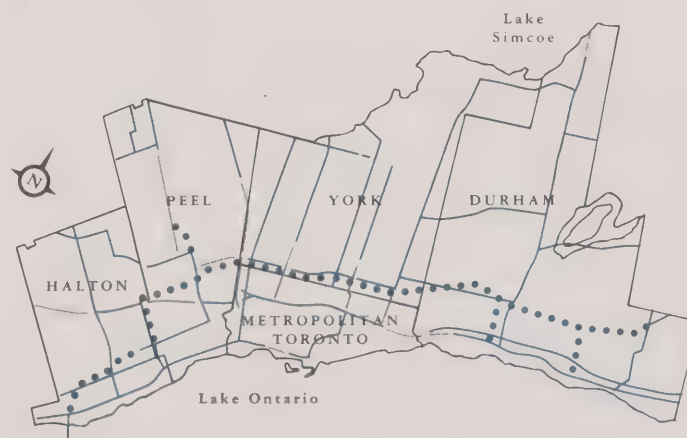
The vision outlined by the Province of Ontario seeks to shape the process of growth, not stop it, but to redirect it in ways which will be consistent with the emerging consensus and its values of social equity, enhanced employment and economic vitality and a healthy environment. As outlined above, the consensus of managing growth in a nodal pattern will require further research in order to reach acceptance of more detailed decisions. While further discussion needs to take place around the definition of nodes, it is envisaged that the areas in which growth can

The GO commuter rail system has been superimposed on the original railway network.



Existing / Planned Commuter Rail

Existing	Planned
— Full Service (All Day/Two Way)	Enhanced Full Service (All Day/Two Way)
— Peak Period (One Way)	Full Service (All Day / Two Way)
— Limited Service (Peak Period / One Way)	Enhancement
... No Service	Service Extension
■ Planned New Station	
● Union Station	



Existing / Planned Highways

— Existing
— Planned Widening
... Planned Expansion

A vast network of highways in the GTA continues to be expanded to serve development on the urban fringe.



Low density development has spread rapidly, consuming greenlands.

occur will eventually be defined. However, as the edge of the urban envelope generally follows the boundaries of the already urbanised portions of existing cities and towns it will not be defined as a simple geometrical shape, but will be penetrated in many areas by significant green spaces which need to be preserved.

Beyond this defined urban edge, there are many existing towns, villages and hamlets. In these cases, the objective will be to complete the urban fabric within these areas, filling in undeveloped or underdeveloped parcels, while preserving greenlands and agricultural lands. Such a strategy will allow both the urbanised and the rural areas to continue to function as viable areas within the GTA.

Within the established boundaries of the urban envelope, development will occur in areas which offer significant potential for more intensive use such as vacant industrial areas, under-utilized main streets, shopping centres and business parks. Ideally, such intensification will either occur in the form of consolidation of existing nodes and corridors which are supported by rapid transit or in the emergence of new ones. It is intended that there will be a great variety of types of new urban settings in different locations, catering to a variety of lifestyle choices and reflecting the true diversity of the population.

In keeping with the ingredients of the emerging consensus, the Provincial GTA 2021 document envisages a Greater Toronto Area

based on well defined, compact communities where a variety of employment opportunities, and a wide variety of housing choices would ensure social equity for people of different ages, economic means and with different personal priorities. Social services would be available in close proximity. Ideally, most members of the household would have work opportunities available within the community.

Shopping and neighbourhood facilities would be accessible on foot, along with parks and open spaces. Public transit would be readily available and easily accessible both within and between these smaller higher density communities. For citizens of the GTA both the experience of the true countryside including interconnected greenways and agricultural areas and the experience of the truly urban would be enhanced.

Planning for the GTA would be based on the ecosystem approach and reflect a watershed orientation as advocated in the *"Regeneration"* report of the Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront. Cooperative and integrated decisions across existing jurisdictional boundaries would improve the use of scarce resources to provide more efficient infrastructure and lower the



Massive investments in infrastructure, including highways, have been made.

cost of doing business in the Greater Toronto Area thereby creating the conditions for greater prosperity.

Summary

This section has summarized some of the foundation blocks which have guided recent thinking in examining GTA issues and options. These new approaches offer promising possibilities for dealing with change. There is also a general consensus on many basic principles surrounding the issues. Now there is a need to apply some new thinking to the individual issues and substantive areas relevant to the GTA, to form a solid basis for a comprehensive strategy. The Working Group reports reviewed in the next section are a first attempt to address these substantive issues in greater detail.

Moving Forward: The Six Working Group Reports

Chapter Three

As a part of the process of furthering consensus, and forming a basis for concerted action, the GTA 2021 Report announced the establishment of six provincial/municipal staff Working Groups: Human and Social Development; Economic Vitality; Urban Form; Countryside; Infrastructure; and, Investment Planning and Financing Mechanisms.

Their mandate was to expand and test the feasibility of this vision, consolidate work already completed independently in various ministries, agencies and municipalities, and outline the next steps to be taken.

These Working Group reports are summarized below. There is as yet no general consensus on the ideas put forward in the reports. They are provided to generate discussion and assist in the subsequent formulation of a growth strategy for the GTA. The reports do not represent government policy nor are they necessarily reflective of the view of individual ministries or municipalities. This section also provides an independent commentary of each report.

HUMAN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (HUMAN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP)

Planning for a diverse and changing population, and developing socially integrated communities were major issues identified for the GTA. Three themes run through the report:

- *Human and Social Development* – the ways in which the community works to support people, individually and in communities. The group suggests an approach to these and other related issues in which planning is viewed as fundamentally about people, and the goals of planning are goals of human and social development.
- *Human Services* – the formal services, primarily in the areas of health, education, culture and recreation, social services, and legal and protection services. While playing a fundamental role, human services represent only a component of an approach to human and social development, which incorporates several goals, such as adequate basic needs satisfaction, economic security and opportunity.
- *Participatory Democracy* – the active and decisive involvement of people and communities in planning and deciding about the things that are important to them.



The Greater Toronto Area community will continue to diversify and change in terms of ethnicity, culture and background. Coupled with the changing nature of "community", the nature and complexity of human services must change.

In light of the substantial changes under way in the GTA, four fundamental issues are identified:

1. *Human and social development planning is not integrated into other forms of planning.*
2. *The traditional consultation and public participation processes are inadequate.*
3. *Jurisdictional boundaries for the provision of different human services do not always coincide.*
4. *"Human services planning" as a concept is inadequate from the GTA perspective.*

The human and social development perspective put forward here calls for a shift from an approach where the goal is to manage problems to a preventive model based on mutual interdependence. Individuals and communities are acknowledged as partners with rights and responsibilities and are assumed to be able to identify what they need to realise their potential.

The report asserts that this approach to both human services planning and larger planning processes for the GTA will, among other things: facilitate the integration of economic, environmental and human service planning; allow for the integration of planning across various jurisdictions; and, improve the provision of accessible and relevant

support services. The report identifies several significant trends:

- *the Greater Toronto Area community will continue to change in terms of ethnic and cultural backgrounds;*
- *our understanding of community has changed, people no longer belong to a single neighbourhood or locality-based community; they belong to many different communities;*
- *the nature, complexity and orientation of human services has changed; and,*
- *there is a greater need for human and social development planning to be integrated into all the planning processes including the development of mechanisms to ensure interjurisdictional coordination, cooperation and collaboration etc.*

Several approaches are suggested to address the issues, such as fuller involvement of people in planning and decision-making processes. Decision-making needs to be overtly democratic, in every area, including human services, urban form, and other aspects of the planning process. Suggested vehicles for this include neighbourhood-led micro-planning, plebiscite voting on official plans and budgets, and organised advocacy for community groups.

Several suggestions are put

forward to improve the integration of human and social development with other aspects of planning, including:

- *The development of a human and social development framework;*
- *Social Impact Assessments as an integral component of Official Plan and other planning processes;*
- *full-cost social accounting approaches comparable to full cost natural resources accounting; and,*
- *new GTA-level coordinating bodies or processes for significant facilities or social costs, such as specialized hospital services, post secondary education, and large scale cultural and recreational facilities.*

To increase the flexibility of human services planning and implementation, mechanisms such as the creation of "funding envelopes" are proposed. All sources of funding for human services would be combined into a single envelope and transferred to the jurisdiction, which would, through a community-based governing board, make allocation decisions. A framework is also proposed for more fully integrating human and social development goals with planning policies, based on the basic development goals.

Some preliminary relationships



Residential development at the fringe is highly dependent upon the automobile for access to all activities.



In "Watershed", the Crombie Commission recommended that the waterfront should be clean, green, useable, diverse, open accessible, connected, affordable and attractive.

between the various study areas are identified. The complex issues of human service delivery and urban form are cited as an example. There must be sufficient flexibility in land use and built environment to accommodate local delivery of human services. The linkages between urban form and human development are more complex, however. Urban form can be a source of demand for human services. "A more pro-active, people centred planning approach suggests the need for fuller understanding of the dynamics between urban form and the lives of those who live and work in it so that the urban form serves people."

The final recommendations of the Human and Social Development Group include:

- *that human and social development goals be developed, adopted and mandated as the overriding goals of all types of planning processes in the GTA, and incorporated into those processes;*
- *that the participation of people be an integral part of all planning processes;*
- *that Human Service Plans be developed at all levels of government within the GTA and have comparable status to Official Plans;*
- *that Social Impact Assessments be an integral part of all types of planning processes within the GTA;*
- *that integrated planning processes be developed to ensure that the range of*

human services are designed and delivered in an integrated and accountable way;

- *that a public advisory mechanism be included as a key component of environment, land use, economic, human services and fiscal planning processes; and,*
- *that a forum be established at the GTA level for ongoing discussion of Human Service issues.*
- *that the active collaboration of voluntary and government human service providers and planners be recognized as an essential requirement to ensure integrated planning centred on human and social development goals.*

Commentary

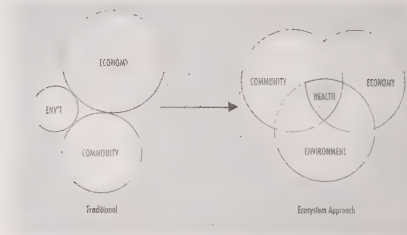
That human and social development should be the starting point of all planning processes is a self-evident approach, but one which is often overlooked. Unfortunately, some aspects of city-building have indeed become overly technocratic, and the underlying rationale and principles have become lost in highly precise standards and technical practice. Achieving an approach which consciously places human and social development goals first will be difficult to implement in practice, and care must be taken in adding to the existing regulatory frameworks

and roster of requirements.

Probably the most important relationship between urban form and human and social development is the need to create a variety of livable communities which cater to a diversifying population. This means creating a number of housing types, living environments, and employment opportunities which permit local community life to flourish.

In terms of accessibility to human services, the nodal concept would represent an improvement over the current situation, in which human services tend to be concentrated in existing GTA centres, which are fewer and centralised. The creation of a more articulated urban form, with many nodes and centres of all kinds, accessible by transit, walking, or cycling, will provide greater opportunities for providing human services than the status quo, and as such, represents a higher degree of access to social and cultural facilities and services, thus promoting a greater social equity.

The economic well being of a community is also linked inexorably to human and social development in a number of ways. Therefore the recommendations cannot be overstated but in fact are even more meaningful when linked to the economic health of a region.



The ecosystem approach requires decisions be made considering environmental, economic, and community impacts together.

Source: Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront, "Regeneration", 1992

PROMOTING ECONOMIC VITALITY (ECONOMIC VITALITY WORKING GROUP)

The members of this Working Group were given the task of identifying the elements which should be contained in a strategy to promote economic vitality for the GTA.

In conducting this exercise, the members of the working group made educated guesses as to the perceptions and demands that preferred organisations and enterprises might have with regard to the GTA. These preferred enterprises and organizations include those which have high-value added products, are environmentally sensitive, have a high R&D component, are high growth or have international prestige. The group also conjectured as to the strengths and weaknesses of the GTA. A comparison between the perceptions of the preferred organisations and the performance of the GTA, exposed several “performance gaps”. The Working Group then suggested some objectives and opportunities for overcoming these performance gaps.

The Working Group suggested that its findings must be considered not as a *fait accompli* but as the beginning of a strategic process, which should be tested with the private sector to determine its validity.

The Economic Vitality Working Group paper identifies several key factors which affect competitiveness, including:

- *Infrastructure;*
- *Cost of doing business and government policy;*
- *People;*
- *Research and development;*
- *Sectoral infrastructure;*
- *Head offices; and,*
- *Development activity.*

A review of the current situation and trends with respect to these factors of competitiveness suggested that although cyclical effects (i.e. the recession) account for much of the current economic downturn, the impact of globalisation, restructuring and an aging labour force will continue after the recession has ended and therefore, ensuring economic vitality will be dependent upon the area's flexibility to adapt to new circumstances.

An economic vitality strategy is based on the goal of retaining, attracting and growing preferred enterprises and organisations. The

THE GTA ECONOMY: SOME FACTS

- *Lester B. Pearson Airport, directly and indirectly, contributes over \$4 billion to the GTA economy.*
- *In 1987, it was estimated that congestion had added about 40% to the cost of moving goods in the GTA over the previous ten years, and that by 1997 a further 80% – 90% will be added if the situation remains unchanged.*
- *The total cost for medical insurance, workers' compensation, unemployment insurance, and social security is about 10% of business payrolls in Ontario compared to about 25% in Illinois, Michigan, New York, California and Ohio.*
- *Property taxes in the downtown Toronto core are second highest in North America, behind New York City.*
- *In 1988, Canada's business expenditure on R&D was 0.8% of Gross Domestic Product, compared to 2.1% in Germany and 2.0% in Japan.*
- *The total available industrial floor space in 1988 was estimated at 4 million square metres, compared to 8 million square metres in 1991.*

Source: Economic Vitality Working Group Paper

GTA has certain strengths and weaknesses in their ability to support preferred enterprises. Among the strengths are:

- *a high standard of living;*
- *a good public health care system; and,*
- *a highly educated work force.*

The perceived weaknesses of the GTA include:

- *a high tax burden;*
- *a high cost of living;*
- *congested transportation systems;*
- *lack of investment in R&D; and,*
- *limited access to investment capital for small and medium-sized firms.*

Amongst the perceived weaknesses, five critical GTA “performance gaps” are identified.

- *The provision of adequate infrastructure is overburdened by legislation, such as the Environmental Assessment Act, by fragmented jurisdictions, and lack of integrated capital planning.*
- *The cost of doing business is high due to the costs of regulation, the relatively high tax burden (Federal, Provincial and municipal), and congestion costs.*
- *Lack of a comprehensive skill needs assessment, inappropriate academic standards, and lack of a responsive training and continuous learning culture were gaps associated with people.*
- *Investment in R&D is impaired by unavailability of venture capital and lack of emphasis on applied science.*
- *Relationships among business, labour and government are characterised by a lack of strategy within which partnerships could be realised, and basic differences in perspective, such as profit versus social policy agendas, or accountability.*

Several actions are prescribed by the Economic Vitality Working

Group as means of overcoming the performance gaps.

Improvements to infrastructure in the GTA are supported by:

- *streamlining legislation and reducing regulatory costs;*
- *developing an integrated infrastructure planning process for the GTA; and,*
- *developing multi-year capital plans.*

Reducing the cost of doing business implies:

- *reducing regulatory costs;*
- *reducing the tax burden; and,*
- *reducing congestion.*

Measures to promote an adequate supply of appropriately skilled people include:

- *developing timely and flexible responses to skill needs; and,*
- *developing clear standards, roles and responsibilities among governments, private sector and individuals.*

Partnership among business, labour and government can be supported by measures such as:



Greenways ensure the integrity and continuing existence of a balanced ecosystem.

- *promoting mobility of people among the three sectors; and,*

- *developing a vision and economic/ social strategy with focus, clarity of purpose and common objectives within which partnerships can fit.*

Moving toward an innovation-based economy depends in part upon:

- *an increased emphasis on applied science; and,*
- *promoting R&D.*

In essence the report suggests elements of a strategy, such as the need to attract high value- added industries, or address performance gaps, without stating an actual plan.

However, the report concludes by suggesting some possible actions, including:

- *priority should be given to integrated infrastructure planning and investment;*

- *emphasis should be placed on creating an efficient and positive regulatory climate;*

- *development of a flexible, adaptable, skilled labour force through measures such as the Ontario Training and Adjustment Board;*

- *partnerships among business, labour and government should be developed to open lines of communication;*

- community-based economic development activities *should be promoted and facilitated*;
- complete statistical data *for the GTA should be made available*; and,
- the Province and municipalities *should cooperate in marketing the GTA*.

The report endorses a number of key components of the emerging GTA vision stating:

- *that economic vitality will be enhanced by compact development and the preservation of the countryside; that environmental remediation leads to increased economic prosperity*;
- *that equitable delivery of high quality, responsive human services is essential to ensuring economic vitality*;
- *that timely sufficient provision of infrastructure supports economic activity*; and,
- *that economic vitality is dependent upon co-ordinated priority setting for the GTA and innovative and creative financing mechanisms*.

Commentary

The kinds of fundamental change described in the economic vitality

paper, such as the formation of international trading blocs, or in some cases, the dissolution of nation-states, signal an increasingly important role for cities and their regions in economic development. In order to compete in the international marketplace, businesses must increasingly draw upon the city's diverse labour and skills, its infrastructure, its technology, its highly sophisticated services, its culture, its institutions of higher learning and research capabilities, its diverse web of other businesses. In Europe, where the regional trading bloc is most highly evolved, cities and their regions are taking on new roles in economic development such as services to small business or technology assistance.

In Canada, with the current Free Trade Agreement and the potential for continental free trade looming, some of the same effects can be expected. All this means that cities, including the GTA, will play an increasingly important role in the economic and political lives of Canadians, and it will be especially critical for cities to function effectively to promote competitiveness and a continued high quality of life.

The Economic Vitality Working Group has identified some approaches to improving the competitiveness of



Through compact transit-oriented development, the Provincial vision seeks to set boundaries to growth and help preserve the integrity of the countryside.

GTA enterprises, and suggested some areas where action can be taken, especially those relating to fully utilizing existing infrastructure and reducing the costs of doing business. Actions in other areas, however, such as skills development, labour/ business/ government partnership, and promoting innovation have not traditionally been issues addressed at the municipal level, but rather have been dealt with at the Provincial or Federal levels. One of the principal difficulties inherent in creating an economic strategy for the GTA is that there is no single mechanism which exists to bring together provincial, municipal, regional, labour and private sector interests. Perhaps there is a role at the municipal level; indeed, given a context in which cities take on a more important role in economic development, and a growing movement toward bottom-up, community-based economic

development initiatives, there is certainly scope for cities to take on more active roles in these areas, as they have in Europe. However, this represents a more significant and involved undertaking than that associated with providing infrastructure and reducing the cost of doing business, and other goals, such as avoiding duplication of government roles, must be considered.

CREATING A COMPACT URBAN FORM (URBAN FORM WORKING GROUP)

One idea upon which there is much consensus in the GTA is the need to deviate from the current pattern of low density, peripheral sprawl to one that represents more compact forms of urban development. The OGTA process to this point has led to a consensus around the concept of a "nodal" urban structure, and

“compact urban form”.

Compact urban form is seen as promoting many identified goals, including:

- *environmental protection and energy conservation;*
- *agricultural land and open space conservation;*
- *enhanced use of public transit, walking and cycling;*
- *active, secure public spaces;*
- *house forms and costs accessible to a broad range of ages, incomes, and household types;*
- *more efficient expenditures on infrastructure, such as sewers, roads, and public transit; and,*
- *accessible community services.*

The Urban Form in the GTA report sets out to define further what the concepts of “compact urban development” and “nodal structure” actually mean, and how they can be implemented. The first characteristic of urban form is what the Group calls the “*development pattern*”. This is essentially the area which is now or is intended, through Official Plans or zoning, for urban use – the



committed urbanised area. The report takes the approach that the development pattern has already been determined until 2011 through existing development commitments, such as Official Plan policy. This recognizes that some greenfields development will occur. The decision for development on these lands cannot generally be reversed. The report suggests that instead, more compact development occur on these lands, thereby extending their overall

Shaping growth into a nodal pattern is a major component of a growth management strategy.

TYPES OF NODES

Type of Node	Function	Mix of Uses	Scale	Form (<i>density / intensity</i>)
CENTRAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unique focal point of provincial and national significance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provincial/national significant uses (e.g. government, culture, tourism, business) • National head offices • Limited residential • Highest employment concentration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest densities • Highest level transit (subway/LRT) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest building concentration • Street oriented • Max. pedestrian movements • Unique features/facilities (cultural/business/tourism attractions, i.e. sports and entertainment)
MAJOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GTA-wide focal point 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High diversity of uses • High employment concentration • Mix of residential / commercial / retail but residential employment balance higher than central node 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively high densities • Higher level transit (subway / LRT) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High building concentration • Street oriented • Pedestrian oriented • Diversity of uses
INTERMEDIATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intra-regional focal point 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment / commercial / retail predominant • Growing high density residential component • Some diversity of uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-medium densities • More vehicular oriented than major / central • Medium level transit, surface transit(bus, streetcar, GO transit) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Siting of building integrated with transit • More extensive parking facilities
LOCAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community / neighbourhood focal point 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local rail and service uses (e.g. smaller shopping malls) • Service related employment • Residential component 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower to medium density • Lowest level of transit (e.g. bus) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structures oriented to maximize walking/ cycling access • Auto-oriented

development potential and development time frame. Principles for the development of such lands proposed by the Urban Form working group include:

- *encourage higher residential and employment densities;*

- *improve the live/work relationship; and,*

- *encourage more effective use of existing infrastructure.*

On land that is proposed for development, the potential to influence both the “*form/intensity*”

Table 1

GUIDING CRITERIA

Type of Node	Size of Node	Resident Employment Mix	Density Coverage	Employment (needs to support transit)
MAJOR	75 – 150 ha	1 resident per 2.5 jobs	<i>Reurbanising</i> In excess of 6 times coverage F.S.I. <i>Urbanising</i> In excess of 4 times coverage F.S.I.	25,000 to 100,000 jobs Desirable target 60,000
INTERMEDIATE	up to 75 ha	1 resident per 1.5 – 2.0 jobs	<i>Reurbanising Areas</i> 3 to 6 times coverage F.S.I. <i>Urbanising</i> 2 to 4 times coverage F.S.I.	7,000 to 25,000 jobs
LOCAL	up to 75 ha	1 resident per 0.5 jobs	<i>Reurbanising</i> 2 to 4 times coverage F.S.I. <i>Urbanising</i> 1 to 2 times coverage F.S.I.	Less than 7,000 jobs

(i.e., the built form and density) of development and “*structure*” (the overall pattern of concentration of development) is identified. On land for future development there is much greater potential to influence the *development pattern, structure, and form/intensity*.

The second characteristic of urban form is structure. An urban *structure* comprised of a hierarchy of nodes and corridors is proposed, based on public transit. The hierarchy of nodes is

comprised of: a central node, major, intermediate and local nodes. Linear concentrations of development or “corridors” should also be encouraged. The nodes are described in Table 1, and criteria for their selection are also proposed (Table 2). Nodes and corridors are identified with a set of guiding principles including the availability of public transit and the optimisation of infrastructure. A GTA urban structure concept is proposed, which is described as “a network of

Table 2

network of linked major corridors within which are a series of major and intermediate nodes". Twenty-three specific nodes are tentatively identified, although the Working Group acknowledged that these may change as discussion occurs.

In addition, several other types of development areas are identified, including business parks, industrial areas, special purpose areas (Garrison Common, Pearson Airport), and lower density areas (i.e. more compact new neighbourhoods).

The third and final characteristic of urban form is "*form/intensity*", with respect to which two principles are suggested: that there be a mix of residential, employment and cultural activities; and that in higher density areas, urban design focus on the pedestrian environment and promoting transit use. A division of responsibilities is recommended by the Working Group in implementing the nodal urban form. The Province would be responsible for maintaining a cooperative atmosphere, for relevant legislation, and for creating a policy statement under the Planning Act which would adopt the nodal urban form for the GTA. The Regions would be responsible for defining urban structure within their boundaries in consultation with local municipalities. And the local

municipalities would be responsible for determining the form/intensity characteristics of development. The report suggests that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs could play a key role in coordinating implementation measures at the municipal level and should coordinate the activities of other Ministries.

Commentary

The urban form report accepts the currently committed *development pattern*. It is important to know the extent of this potentially urbanised area, and its nature. Much of the urban envelopes for local municipalities were based on the assumptions of "filling in" unurbanised areas, low density development, and often optimistic projections of future demand for housing and workplaces. In addition, some of the areas in this envelope may be important natural areas. Under these circumstances, reconsideration of the currently "committed" envelope may be warranted.

The multi-centred urban structure proposed does achieve a wide variety of objectives, such as shortening average trip lengths, or improving social equity by allowing better access to services and amenities. The

importance of defining the nodes and corridors in performance terms is stressed, e.g. in terms of size, population, live/work, targets, etc. While the parameters provided in the report may not be definitive, the need of such performance criteria is clear. Certainly there are basic parameters for balancing residential and employment uses, and for density, which are as important as the identification of the nodes and corridors for achieving goals such as supporting transit. More than other factors, the right balance of appropriately matched housing and employment, in the right locations, contributes significantly to two way trips, and efficient use of transit infrastructure, for example.

However, jobs/housing balance targets must be carefully defined. The approach proposed in Tables 1 and 2 seems to have been adopted from Metro Toronto, which has very unique characteristics. In particular, it has a large projected surplus of jobs compared to the resident labour force, which led to an approach in which the "surplus jobs" were directed to the major nodes, resulting in jobs/housing ratios tilted towards jobs in those locations. Many areas in the GTA have the reverse problem, that is, an overabundance of residents and relative undersupply of jobs – so a different approach to balance in nodes



Significant green spaces occur within cities as well as in the countryside.

would be needed. Also, demographics may vary, meaning the ratio of labour force to total population will differ within local areas, therefore the appropriate jobs: population ratio will vary locally as well.

Finally, when discussing the *structure* of nodes and corridors, a gross measure of density which applies to the entire node or corridor may be more appropriate than a floor space index (fsi). A gross urban density parameter, in people and jobs per gross hectare for example, is more compatible with large scale planning, transit planning, and so on. It alleviates confusion in the many interpretations of fsi, and allows municipalities greater flexibility to determine the form of buildings within their jurisdictions, on urban design grounds.

On the issue of *form/intensity*, there will be a need to go much further in exploring the character and qualities



Many towns in the Greater Toronto Area are surrounded by significant green spaces.

of denser, more compact urban form and the streets, blocks, and building types which make it up. The examples of successful denser form cited in the Urban Form Report are more in the nature of isolated developments than portions of urban fabric and this exploration must be expanded to the node, corridor, or neighbourhood scale.

It is also essential to understand exactly the impediments in the current regulatory framework to the introduction of these new types of compact neighbourhoods. Over the past few decades a highly efficient delivery system has evolved, built around stereotyped responses to urban and particularly suburban development. There is a standard approach to Zoning and Official

Plans, designs for housing and for the lotting of plans of subdivision, for road widths and the placement of services and utilities, etc. These are all linked to consistently support the status quo and are very difficult to tinker with on a piecemeal basis. If we are to develop a new paradigm we will have to rigorously re-examine the unspoken value judgements built into this delivery system.

Not all of what we will discover in such a re-examination is entirely new. In fact much of what is required now to achieve new types of urban form involves a sympathetic re-examination of what was previously rejected or ignored. There is a great deal that is useful and pertinent in the layout and organisation of Ontario cities, towns, and villages of the

period before the automobile had become the primary determinant of urban form. The compactness, the neighbourliness, the unselfconscious mix and overlap of uses, the ability to walk from place to place, and the relationship of urban settlements to an adjacent countryside, are once again seen as valuable attributes.

It is important that the character of our existing residential communities be maintained. It is not only existing buildings and neighbourhoods in our older towns and cities which are worthy of preservation and “recycling” but many of the concepts which shaped them as well. In this respect many areas of the GTA have a head start with the presence of viable examples of compact urban form such as exists in the historic settlements like Oakville, Brampton, Markham, Whitby etc.

A VISION FOR THE COUNTRYSIDE (COUNTRYSIDE WORKING GROUP)

The Countryside has tended to be viewed as that part of the GTA which was not “urban”; as “undeveloped” land awaiting some form of “higher and better” use. The Countryside Report contends that our relationship with the Countryside has tended to be exploitive, dominating, and insensitive to its unique

characteristics. New attitudes towards the countryside, along with a new rural/urban relationship ensures the continuation of a healthy and diverse GTA community.

Specifically, the Countryside Working Group identified three principles founded in an ecosystem approach which should form the basis of this new interdependent relationship:

- *the countryside is a distinct and valuable entity which contributes to the overall quality of life in the GTA;*
- *much greater attention must be given to addressing issues and problems in the countryside in order to protect and enhance its unique character, values and functions; and*
- *greenlands and agricultural lands are critical to the long term social, economic and environmental health of the entire GTA and must be actively protected for the future.*

The Countryside Working Group has identified several important roles that the countryside plays in the GTA, and for each area has identified specific issues, objectives and strategies. The roles include: Greenlands; Agriculture; Tourism and Recreation; Trails; Resources Related Land Uses such as Aggregates; and

COUNTRYSIDE FACTS

- *Approximately 5,000 archaeological sites were destroyed in Halton, Peel, and York Regions between 1951 and 1971, of which 1,500 would have been considered significant enough to warrant further study.*
- *Loss of agricultural and other rural lands through scattered industrial/commercial development, low density residential development, and estate residential development. Between 1981 and 1986, 20,600 ha of agricultural land alone were converted to urban uses.*
- *There are currently thousands of registered estate residential lots within the GTA countryside, which have tended to focus on environmentally sensitive areas including forests, adjacent to stream valleys, and in scenic rolling areas. Many additional estate lots are currently proposed in the GTA.*

Source: Countryside Working Group Report

Countryside Communities. Emphasis was placed on the need to examine the countryside economy and its linkages within the GTA and indeed the Province.

One of the most significant and valued characteristics of the Countryside is the quality and diversity of the natural and cultural heritage environment more commonly referred to as “greenlands”. The first section of the report develops a strategy for protecting, enhancing and linking these “greenlands” in the GTA.

In the section on agriculture, the report notes that urban strategies which emphasize intensification and

redevelopment of existing urban form strategies are highly beneficial for continued agricultural use. Within the Countryside, the report recommends establishing the greenland envelope first and then outside the envelope, a hierarchy of compatible communities be established as focal points for growth and development activity in the Countryside.

For each subject area, strategies are recommended. These include primarily: amendments to legislation, new legislation, Provincial policy, changes to municipal Official Plans, developing private land stewardship techniques, such as land trusts,




actions to increase community involvement, and agency coordination.

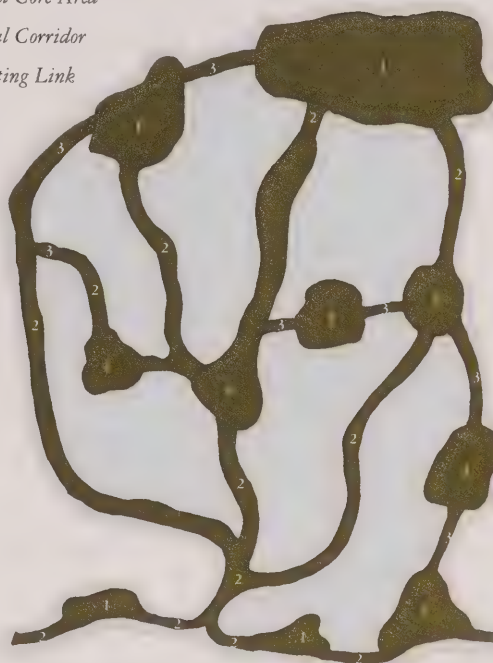
The rural economy was touched upon by the Working Group in various sections of the report, however it was not dealt with in detail. The Working Group noted that the economic linkages of the Countryside to the broader GTA economy and the importance of the rural economy to the long term vitality of the Countryside are complex issues which require further detailed study. In addition, they noted that further work is needed to examine the financing mechanisms available to assist Countryside municipalities in being partners in the GTA Vision.

Some examples of the numerous actions recommended by the Countryside Working Group include:

- *a multi-agency committee established by the Province composed of regional, municipal, Provincial, Conservation Authority, and non-government organisations to coordinate the planning and implementation of an interregional trails system in the GTA;*
- *increased land and cash-in-lieu parkland dedication requirements to allow the development of linear and linked natural heritage systems;*

Conceptual Natural Heritage System

-  Human Dominated Area
-  Natural Heritage System
 - 1 Natural Core Area
 - 2 Natural Corridor
 - 3 Connecting Link
-  Interface



A Countryside Report proposes a natural heritage system consisting of core areas, corridors, and connecting links. Such systems, which are based on topography, pattern of watercourses, and natural heritage areas such as wetlands,

Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI), significant woodlands and endangered species habitat, would serve as a framework for urban development.



By directing growth which occurs at the edge of the urban area to existing hamlets and towns, incursions into greenlands and agricultural lands are minimized.

- *the preparation of Heritage Master Plans as a required component of the municipal planning process;*
- *Official Plans of the regional municipalities which clearly establish the limits of urban, rural and greenland envelopes; and,*
- *Regional Official Plans which provide policies to direct commercial/industrial growth to Growth Areas and Rural Service Centres, and prohibit scattered commercial industrial development.*

Commentary

The Countryside report represents a radical change in both the way we think about the countryside, and the

framework necessary to preserve and improve it. In short, the approaches suggest that the countryside should be given a new primacy which is currently lacking. Some fairly dramatic recommendations are made regarding this new framework. The lack of a framework is the most significant issue raised in the report – most of the recommended actions have to do with establishing it.

A major departure is the idea of the countryside as a permanent feature, not a part of the landscape which gradually succumbs to suburbanisation. How the preservation of countryside functions and features can be achieved, in both areas that are not currently designated urban (but expectation of the possibility exists)



Vast single use areas such as obsolescent industrial lands, shopping centres and underutilized transportation yards are available for reurbanisation.

and areas that are currently designated for urban uses is a major issue which needs further work.

Certainly changes of the magnitude suggested in the Countryside Report are warranted, and a strong framework will be required to realise goals such as an integrated trails system or greenlands protection. A long list of potential actions is presented in the Countryside Report. These actions must be reviewed in the context of goals established in the other reports, in order to ensure an integrated approach to the issue.

INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS (INFRASTRUCTURE WORKING GROUP)

The infrastructure report takes the “nodal” urban structure as a given, and tries to identify transportation improvements, water and sewer

improvements and new approaches to support it. A nodal urban form encourages the effective utilization of all infrastructure. As an example, for transportation infrastructure, it reduces overall travel effort and dependency on the private automobile, and encourages the use of public transit, walking and cycling. The central issue related to transportation is simply that projected future growth cannot be accommodated by relying to the same degree we do today on the private automobile: “...due to physical and other constraints, road capacity could not be increased sufficiently to avoid a lowering of levels of service... This result underlies the importance of land use planning in reducing commuting and in supporting public transit. It also implies a much more ambitious program of transit improvements than might have

originally been thought necessary.”¹

Other transportation issues which exist today include:

- *Low modal splits in the Regional Municipalities. Outside Metro Toronto, transit use is in the range of 7% to 11% of all trips.*
- *The cost of congestion to Metro Toronto businesses is estimated at \$2 billion annually.*
- *The major growth in commuting trips has been from areas of high population growth outside Metro's boundaries to growing employment opportunities in Metro Toronto. These trips are not currently well serviced by transit and have contributed to an increase in average work trip length of almost 4 km since 1961.*
- *Growth in travel demand has outstripped population growth, due to longer trips, more trips per capita, and greatly increased car ownership levels.*

The nodal concept is compatible with an improved transit system. The four major nodes located in Metro, all of which are on existing rail and/or rapid transit lines, were found to be capable of short term growth without significant system expansion initiatives. The other nodes should be served by extensions to the rapid transit system and/or links to the GO

transit commuter rail system.

In the short term, measures to optimise the existing system are proposed, as well as some expansions to the system. Using existing infrastructure as efficiently as possible is an essential first step in expanding the system capacity, including cost-based user pricing, which can greatly influence user behaviour while providing an improved basis for dedicated financing of infrastructure maintenance and expansion. Other system optimisation measures include:

- *integrated urban development and infrastructure through new mechanisms for coordinated planning amongst GTA governments and agencies;*
- *transit priority measures such as HOV and transit priority lanes;*
- *transit fare integration and service coordination.*

Short-term system expansion elements include:

- *selected links in the rapid transit network;*
- *all day service on GO rail lines;*
- *higher order service to Pearson International Airport;*

¹ Ministry of Transportation and IBI Group as quoted in the Infrastructure Working Group Report.



More compact development along a rapid transit line is in keeping with the goals of intensification.

- *highway constructions and widenings, including construction of Highway 407 from Airport Road to Hwy. 10, Highway 403 through Halton Region.*

Longer term optimisation measures include:

- *integrated urban development and infrastructure planning, through a single GTA government, or a committee structure such as the GTCC;*
- *system integration, including fare integration and service coordination, through a federated approach or GTA transit union; and,*
- *consideration of alternative transportation financing mechanisms, including government/landowner*

partnerships for financing rapid transit, user charges such as fuel tax; direct pricing for the use of roads which are congested, and design or modification of taxes and subsidies affecting transportation.

Long term system expansion elements include:

- *remaining links in the rapid transit network;*
- *selective upgrading of HOV services to full rapid transit;*
- *continuing upgrading of commuter rail service; and,*
- *completion of Hwy. 407, and the Hwy. 410 extension to Snelgrove.*



The revitalization of a former industrial district within walking distance to the downtown area is also an example of reurbanisation.

The estimated short terms costs amount to \$11.2 billion, \$4.6 billion of which is devoted to highways and roads, and the rest to rapid transit and commuter rail. A review of sewer and water servicing capacities revealed potential in all areas of the GTA except in Metropolitan Toronto. Water and sewerage capacity to serve the eleven identified nodes is either available or will become available through planned expansion of the existing systems. There remain several opportunities to maximize the utilization of existing water and sewer systems in the GTA:

- *a unified commitment to water conservation;*
 - *the introduction of full cost-based pricing;*
 - *the use of growth management strategies;*
 - *inter-regional cooperation to utilise existing capacities in order to resolve deficiencies; and,*
 - *water and sewerage system management measures.*
- Other guiding principles included developing sewage infrastructure on a drainage system basis, and water infrastructure on a service area basis, and following sound environmental considerations through stormwater management, minimizing impact on wetlands, and so on. Improvements to

the sewer and water infrastructure were expected to cost \$3.5 billion to the year 2021 (1991 dollars).

Commentary

The Infrastructure Working Group report has shown that a nodal or compact urban form can be supported. There is a need, however, to rethink the nature of infrastructure in an ecosystem light, not just to apply the same kinds of infrastructure to a different urban form. For example, in the area of stormwater management, new approaches that emphasize natural management techniques, such as planted swales, naturalized retention areas and at-source management represent a qualitatively different approach to existing techniques, which rely exclusively on underground pipes to remove stormwater.

The types of large scale arterial and highway grids which are the current norm may no longer be appropriate. More extensive and finer grained networks are more compatible with the new types of urban form being proposed (see diagrams). The demand for infrastructure cannot be assumed to evolve in a predictable growth pattern; it may be affected by forces such as accessible information technology and “telecommuting”, for example. Further refinement of the

study areas considered in the other five reports may significantly alter the requirements for type, location and capacity of infrastructure currently recommended.

Given the high cost of infrastructure improvements, two principles should be explicit: existing capacities should be used before new infrastructure is built, and the need for new infrastructure should be carefully reviewed. Given the high cost of infrastructure improvements, the following principles should be implemented:

- *optimise the use of existing infrastructure before committing to new high cost infrastructure investments;*
- *where possible adopt low cost, environmentally friendly solutions;*
- *ensure there is full integration of all modes in the planning and implementation of services.*

INVESTMENT PLANNING AND FINANCING MECHANISMS (INVESTMENT PLANNING AND FINANCING MECHANISMS WORKING GROUP)

A variety of studies have estimated that meeting the capital needs for growth, rehabilitation and upgrading of existing infrastructure will require up to \$1 billion more per year than current expenditures. The Investment



Compact urban form allows for parks, shopping facilities, residences and public transportation services all within close proximity.

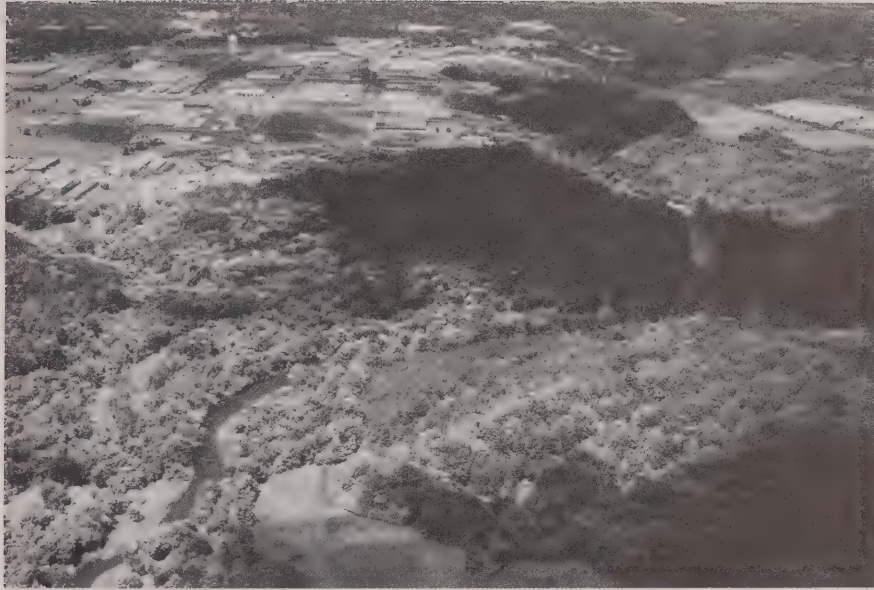
and Finance Working Group identifies two approaches to dealing with this issue:

- *infrastructure with strategic links and/or inter-jurisdictional connection – primarily roads, transit, sewer, water, and waste management – requires integration in planning, priority setting and decision making with regard to financing; and,*
- *new financing mechanisms will be required to support this infrastructure.*

Capital investment by public authorities in the GTA is currently carried out at many levels, by many autonomous bodies, including: five regional municipalities, thirty local governments and their agencies, sixteen school boards, the Province

and its agencies, and the Federal government and its agencies. The capital expenditures are significant – GTA school boards collectively spent about \$500 million in 1990, while local and regional municipalities had capital expenditures of \$1.5 billion in 1990.

“Hence, the investment decisions a municipality does, or does not, make can have significant implications for people and business in neighbouring municipalities, and vice versa. In other words, cross boundary issues affect the quality of life for GTA residents, as well as the continued sustainability of the environment and the economy; they underscore the existing interrelationships in the GTA.”



Planning based on the ecosystem approach would recognize that many natural features – such as waterways – cross jurisdictional boundaries and require inter-jurisdictional planning.

Three models for integrated capital spending are proposed:

- *a joint review committee, with voluntary participation of municipalities and selected Ministries with no authority to approve and implement;*
- *a special purpose body, with representatives appointed by the Province and full authority to make decisions for a specific type of infrastructure; and,*
- *a supra body, comprised of elected regional officials, with mandatory participation, which would focus on all inter-regional infrastructure, and with full authority to decide which investments are made, when and where, how they are financed, and who pays.*

While recognizing accountability concerns, the Working Group's opinion is that the supra body appears to be the most effective and efficient alternative.

Difficult choices will need to be made among competing demands for funding. Criteria are proposed as a priority-setting mechanism, and include:

- *Urban form: support for nodal form, live/work relationship, and intensification of development;*
- *Economics: cost minimization, cost/benefit, suitability for non-government financing and job creation characteristics;*



Each area should have the opportunity to develop its particular strengths. The City of Toronto, as the hub, has a special role in the GTA.

- **Environment:** *support for the extension and linkage of green space, reduction or containment of waste and/or pollutants, and less wasteful use of resources; and,*
- **Social equity:** *contribution toward providing social requirements in a coordinated manner, optimization of access to services by those who need them most.*

Finally, the report reviews alternative financing mechanisms. A first premise is that the need for new infrastructure should be minimized, through efficient urban form and better management techniques. New financing mechanisms proposed include, value capture, co-venturing with the private sector, and a capital

investment corporation – which can issue debt for capital projects to provide front-end financing for capital needs. Criteria for matching the most appropriate mechanism with the infrastructure project are also proposed, and include: beneficiary pay; fairness and equity; ease of implementation and administration; and impact on competitive position.

Commentary

The 1950's and 1960's saw massive investments in hard infrastructure, especially in roads and highways. There was also investment in transit; this was the era in which most of the subway system was constructed in Toronto, for example. Such large-scale



The municipalities of Etobicoke, North York, Scarborough, York and the Borough of East York are maturing. Several of these are rapidly developing defined centres of their own as they enter a phase of reurbanisation, with improved public transit, new employment concentrations, an expanded range of housing options, and a greater array of social and cultural facilities.

investment was supported by a boom economy, and very high rates of economic growth.

Since the 1970's however, investment in hard infrastructure has been minimal. We are now facing a different economic reality, one of slow economic growth associated with a mature economy, high levels of government indebtedness and cutbacks. As such, the roots of this problem do not lie only in the complex multi-jurisdictional nature of the GTA, but the impacts are more deeply felt here because of the urban growth pressures.

Assuming continued slow economic growth and government indebtedness, the development of new instruments for financing public goods (transit, cultural institutions,

etc.) and GTA – wide rationalization of capital spending are essential responses. In addition, the demand for new infrastructure and the nature of that infrastructure must be closely scrutinised. In part, this means making the best use possible of existing infrastructure. The scope of investment-decision making must be broadened to include alternative, non-capital-intensive solutions to GTA issues.

A clear basis for a fair evaluation of choices in a regional perspective, would lead to an understanding that some areas of the Greater Toronto Area represent better investment opportunities for infrastructure to promote the vision than do others. In order to ensure cost effective capital investments, a competitive approach



The cities and towns to the east, north and west of Metro have recently experienced unprecedented growth and provide a strong urban presence with significant public and recreational facilities.

could be contemplated in which a condition of funding for such investments is that cost-effectiveness must be demonstrated. For example, a requirement could be adopted that existing infrastructure has or will be fully utilized and requirements for future infrastructure minimized.

In view of the disengagement of

senior levels of government and funding cutbacks, a gap has evolved which has not yet been filled by commensurate increases in the financial ability of local government to implement some of the new mechanisms. New powers at the local level may be called for, to allow for more innovative local approaches.

Towards a Strategic Action Plan

Chapter Four

The review of Working Group reports shows a significant level of compatibility between the study areas. A high degree of convergence, especially in the areas of compact urban form, a multi-centred urban structure, countryside protection, maximizing use of existing infrastructure and a transit-oriented transportation system represents an excellent starting point for concerted action in the GTA.

A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO URBAN GROWTH

Drawing from the common themes running through the body of work reviewed in this document, it is not difficult to discern the broad outlines of a new approach for growth management. It will be founded in:

- A new relationship with the environment by working with and preserving natural features and processes in the GTA in a more creative way, based on the ecosystem approach.
- Greater efficiency and economy of means in the utilization of scarce resources, particularly as this affects infrastructure.
- An integrated approach to support walking, cycling, and transit use by improving provision of rapid transit and altering the arrangement of land uses to foster mix, integration and transit supportive densities.
- New definitions of community and neighbourliness which offer support and individual choices and which are based on more compact urban areas with a higher degree of interdependence.
- A flexible and adaptable urban environment which can respond to and meet the needs of rapidly changing lifestyles, new types of enterprises, and a rapidly changing society in terms of demographics and ethnicity.
- A balanced approach which recognizes the importance of the countryside.
- Greater use of the inherent economic resources of the entire GTA to stimulate growth, productivity and prosperity.
- Ways of planning together at a number of scales, including a scale which transcends current municipal and regional boundaries.
- A means to appropriately coordinate and integrate joint investments in the future.



If present development patterns continue, another 900 square kilometres of countryside will be urbanised by 2021.

- *Greater provincial leadership in the achievement of these goals.*
- *Promoting social equity in all aspects of the evolution of the GTA.*

In essence these are the goals of a strategic action plan for the GTA.

The elements outlined above together form a comprehensive approach to change in the GTA, which represents the best overall benefit to the GTA. There are some key considerations and areas of interaction between the subject areas of the Working Group reports which deserve particular note.

TRANSIT AND URBAN FORM

Probably the key relationship is that between urban form and the transit system. There is already an (albeit imperfect) policy structure, including Official Plans and Zoning, in place which governs the urban form/transit relationship. As such, it provides a valuable starting point for changing directions in the GTA.

It is clear that an integrated approach is necessary – land use and transit must be planned together to promote efficiency and other goals. An essential ingredient in achieving compact urban form is certainty. The proposed transit network, including levels of service, should be entrenched in some form of policy, the financing mechanisms must be in place and

funding committed. This will allow appropriate land use and density decisions to be made. Without such an explicit commitment, decisions will continue to be made on existing transportation capacities and compact development will not be achievable.

NEW DIRECTIONS AND THE ECONOMY

The proposed nodal structure represents a significant reconfiguring of the spatial organisation of the GTA economy. At present, nodes tend to be in the older areas, where office functions have tended to congregate. The newer urbanised areas have not tended to evolve with any significant concentrations of mixed development. We must think carefully about how nodes in outer areas will be created. What kinds of uses can we expect to locate there to support the nodes? What will the impacts be on existing nodes and the economy?

There are also many initiatives contained collectively in the reports. These must be carefully reviewed together with a view to ensuring that the regulatory burden on enterprises is not increased and that efficient, streamlined mechanisms and frameworks are put in place, in order to be compatible with goals stated in several reports, but especially the emphasis on competitiveness and



Economic vitality is one of the key elements in ensuring quality of life in the GTA.

reducing the cost of doing business, identified by the Economic Vitality Working Group. Included in such an analysis should be consideration of the land market effects of compact urban development and countryside protection, and the potential impacts on other goals.

URBAN FORM, COMMUNITY AND SOFT INFRASTRUCTURE

There is a growing awareness that society is fundamentally changing and that the current *pattern, structure, and form* of development do not work for everyone. With the aging baby boom generation and the declining birth rate, the proportion of older people is increasing. Households are becoming smaller as family size declines and as increasing numbers of people live alone. It seems likely that Canada's immigration will remain high and the ethnic diversity of the GTA will

increase. All of these demographic factors are fundamentally changing the way people live and the types of services and housing which will be required.

In addition to these societal changes, the Human and Social Development report draws attention to the strains which are occurring as a result of the current pattern of peripheral development, with its surges of homogeneous groups of young families. The result is usually a tremendous, often short lived, demand for expensive facilities such as schools, community centres, parks, health care, etc. More diverse communities will moderate the cyclical nature of the demand for services. More flexible, adaptive facilities will also support more efficient and effective delivery of soft services. Also noted are strains and pressures related to the long commute: a loss of discretionary time, the lack of community participation and the tendency for personal burn-out.

All of these issues must be addressed if the quality of life in the GTA is to be enhanced.

THE INSTRUMENTS OF CHANGE

All of the studies which have been conducted or which are under way to date and all of the discussions that



have taken place have underscored the need to develop implementation mechanisms to achieve the goals of ending urban sprawl, promoting nodal development and delineating urban boundaries.

Generally there is concurrence that the means of implementation should:

- *be accountable;*

Human and social development incorporates goals such as satisfying basic needs and ensuring economic security and opportunity.



Adequate infrastructure is critical to ensuring a competitive business environment.

- *preserve or enhance the power of local municipal governments;*
- *not add another layer of government;*
- *clearly establish the roles of the Province, the regions, the local municipalities and other governmental agencies;*
- *permit the achievement of consensus and cooperation; and,*
- *ensure economy of means, i.e. only enough intervention/administration to achieve the desired ends.*

The Working Group reports have identified a vast array of instruments for implementing change. The most significant ones which offer potential to deal with GTA issues are described on the below.

IMPROVED INTER-JURISDICTION COORDINATION

Every report cited the need for better coordination between all levels of government within the GTA. Areas where the need for coordination was suggested included:

- *coordination of "large scale services" such as specialized hospitals, law enforcement, post-secondary education, emergency services, cultural facilities;*
- *integrated infrastructure planning and development;*
- *a common urban form concept, supported by an integrated transit service;*
- *implementation of a greenlands strategy, and establishment of an inter-regional trails system;*

- *inter-regional transit system coordination and fare integration or establishment of an inter-regional transit system; and,*
- *capital expenditure prioritisation.*

In reading the reports, the issue of governance arises. Improved coordination could possibly be achieved through a restructuring of the existing governments. The wide range of options for this restructuring include: establishing single purpose interregional agencies to deal with specific cross boundary issues such as transit, or sewer and water; creating a multi-purpose utility or operating agency; establishing an association of municipal governments in the GTA; undertaking a complete re-vamping of the existing municipal structure to create new forms of municipal institutions.

However, from the beginning of the process to establish a growth management strategy for the GTA, the Province has insisted that it was premature to discuss restructuring of governance arrangements. Their rationale was and continues to be that any debate around the issue would be so time consuming and pervasive that the issues of growth management and planning would be overshadowed for several years.

In fact, good planning techniques

dictate that the issues be addressed first. The structure needed to implement the solutions will then become clearer and may require little change from the present structure. The Province's policy has accordingly been to work with the existing 35 municipalities to develop a growth management strategy. It is clear that the Province intends to continue with this cooperative approach.

URBAN FORM AND DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

Development control is one of the most powerful instruments for achieving desired goals that is in the hands of the municipality. There is already a highly evolved framework in place for this which can also be harnessed to realise compact urban form and to protect greenlands. Existing instruments – primarily Official Plans and zoning – can address this issue, if all governments agree and are committed to the goal of compact urban form. However, some form of GTA overview may still be required including a common commitment to definitive and realistic urban, rural and greenland boundaries.

Other supporting actions that will be required include changes to municipal engineering standards and practices, and a streamlined planning



Development and intensification should be directed to occur in, and in proximity to, emerging nodes.

approvals process, especially in the older, already urbanised areas where redevelopment is essential but where planning and environmental approvals tend to be more time consuming.

CAPITAL NEEDS IDENTIFICATION

All of the reports suggest – explicitly or implicitly – the need for new expenditures. The total cost of the recommended spending will far exceed the money available in the short term. This highlights the need to ensure that existing infrastructure is fully utilized before any new expenditures are considered. The need for prioritisation of capital spending has been identified in the Investment Working Group paper and criteria proposed. Even if spending is not increased, the public sector now invests large sums of capital and we

should be sure that it is achieving public goals. Cost effectiveness of capital investment is one criteria which could be emphasized in such an evaluation. The approach suggested in the Investment paper is an excellent one, which can be acted on relatively quickly.

It should also be noted that there are many recommendations that require programming or operating funding. This spending too would benefit from a systematic prioritisation along the lines of that recommended for capital spending.

PRICING MECHANISMS

Many reports touched on the issue of pricing, suggesting:

- *full cost pricing for water and sewers;*
- *direct road pricing, or user charges;*



Future plans for intensification must avoid some of the pitfalls of recent decades. The character of existing residential communities must be maintained.

- *full cost social and environmental accounting, i.e. taking the social and environmental impacts of a proposed project into account; and,*
- *“value capture” for those benefitting from major public investments (e.g. landowners on a subway line).*

These proposals suggest an underlying realisation that current pricing mechanisms are no longer working satisfactorily. This has to do, in part, with the increasing value attached to things which have not in the past been considered as part of a price – they are positive and negative externalities, outside the pricing mechanism. The impacts of a loss of productive agricultural land or natural features, or the benefits from a

new subway line are not included in the price of land. Similarly, costs of congestion, air pollution, global warming, road construction and maintenance are not directly and fully paid by those who benefit from the highway system. These externalities were not always assigned a value, as they are today. Now that we are coming to attach higher value to them, we need an economic mechanisms that can reflect this change.

More inclusive pricing can also be a good management technique; the price will affect the demand, which is one of the main ideas behind direct road pricing. Automobile transportation on municipal and provincial highways is currently heavily subsidized in the GTA. In



Compact urban form should generally result in human scale, low to medium rise developments.

many other cities including Oslo and Stockholm, systems have already been introduced whereby utilization of this “service” requires some form of payment which often varies according to the time of day or amount of service “used”.

MUNICIPAL TAXATION

Although not explicitly discussed in the Working Group papers, municipal taxation is an important lever at the disposal of municipalities. At the very least, municipal taxation must be made to be consistent with compact urban form, if not proactively supportive of it.

At present, industrial and commercial property taxes in inner areas are high compared to peripheral areas. This has been an important force in peripheralisation, and the growth of low density, land consumptive development.

Taxation policy must be supportive of compact urban form. Greater understanding of the implications of municipal taxation and grant policies in the context of new growth initiatives in the GTA is required.

Future Steps

Chapter Five

Over the past few months, staff of the OGTA have been meeting with municipal councils, municipal staff and interest groups to discuss the Vision. This document has been prepared to facilitate debate around the contents of the Working Group reports.

The Working Group reports and this commentary document will now be circulated to municipal councils as well as to other stakeholders and interest groups for review and comments. Staff of the OGTA will be available to discuss the recommendations in the Working Group reports.

The publication of these reports marks the beginning of the consultation process to develop the strategic action plan which will guide future growth in the Greater Toronto Area.

Additionally, information will be provided in the form of seminars, newspaper articles and meetings with community groups in order to inform and involve those who have not, in the past, been involved but who will be affected by the actions which will eventually be taken.

have already been involved in arriving at the consensus that a co-operative approach was necessary to planning the future growth of the GTA.

In the fall, meetings will be held in each Region to discuss all the reports. The feedback from the regional meetings will be incorporated into the development of the Strategic Action Plan for the GTA. Further meetings will be held with municipalities and with the GTCC as each component of the Strategic Action Plan is prepared.

At any time during this consultation process, the province would welcome official responses from municipalities or regions or any or all of the reports including comments on the Vision document.

Further details regarding the Strategic Action Plan are provided below.

MUNICIPAL ROLE

The regions and municipalities have an ongoing and critical role to play in the development of the growth management strategy. Municipalities

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

The work done by the Working Groups made it clear that all elements of the Strategic Action Plan cannot be implemented at the same time. In



The unspoken values underlying existing zoning, official plans, designs for housing and plans of subdivision must be re-examined and revised if we are to break from the current pattern.

areas such as Urban Form and the Countryside, the necessity of action and the form this action can take is clear. In other areas, such as Human Services and Economic Vitality, further research needs to be done.

The first three components of the Strategic Action Plan will be revised Population and Employment Forecasts, a GTA Urban Form Policy and a Capital Project Requirements Plan.

POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT FORECASTS

The Population and Employment sub-committee, which was initiated in 1989, by the GTCC and chaired by the OGTA will be re-established. It will include representation from the five Regions, Treasury, the Ministry of Transportation and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

The committee will:

- *establish population/households and employment forecasts for the next 30 years, based on the data from the 1991 census.*
- *distribute population/households and employment by Region in line with concentrated nodal development patterns.*
- *in consultation with the municipalities, distribute by municipality the population / households and employment and establish the spatial allocation necessary to accommodate the growth.*

The forecasts which result from this process will be used for planning purposes by all levels of government.

URBAN FORM POLICY

This policy, which will be released in early 1993, will be compatible with the policy directions of the Sewell Commission. It will also build upon



The compactness, the unselfconscious mix of uses, and the relationship of urban settlement to the adjacent countryside in many historic town centres provides guidance for future development.



Countryside should not be viewed as undeveloped land awaiting a “higher or better” use.



The countryside has several important roles, including agriculture, recreation, and resource extraction.

provincial policies for growth and settlement patterns, guidelines for transit-supportive communities, guidelines for the Oak Ridges Moraine, as well as GTA greenlands initiatives.

There is now general consensus that future development in the GTA should be based on a system of nodes (both existing and to be identified) and corridors, supported by a transit network, and should encompass considerations of the natural and cultural environment, transportation, open space and all human activities distributed throughout the GTA.

The key matters to be addressed in this policy includes:

- *a clear definition of the concept for the GTA urban form including a commitment to developing in nodes and corridors;*

- *criteria for 30-year urban boundaries;*
- *principles for the effective use of services;*
- *principles for rural area development;*
- *the broad responsibilities of municipalities to support the vision.*

Municipalities will have been closely involved in the preparation of the Population/Households and Employment Forecasts. As a result, they will be able to begin the implementation of the new urban form by:

- *identifying specific urban nodes and corridors;*
- *establishing the location of 30-year urban boundaries;*



Isolated low density development of countryside lands is undesirable.

- *planning for accessible social, cultural and recreational facilities, particularly in corridors or nodes, which lead to a sense of place and provide opportunities for people to gather as a community;*
- *determining the form/intensity characteristics of development and ensuring that new development is designed as part of the surrounding urban community rather than as isolated projects;*
- *planning for a continuing supply of land, which is serviced with schools, libraries, parks and other human support services as well as roads, transit, water and sewer services;*
- *planning for and protecting the regional and local components of the GTA greenlands systems; and,*
- *identifying rural development nodes.*

INTER-REGIONAL CAPITAL PROJECT REQUIREMENTS PLAN

There is growing recognition that the existing pattern of urban settlement, which sprawls across municipal boundaries, requires all new major infrastructure programs be managed on a wider basis than even regional boundaries.

In response to this need, it is necessary to develop a Capital Project Requirements Plan, in cooperation with the GTCC and relevant Government ministries, such as the Ministry of Transportation and the Ministry of the Environment. This plan will inventory and prioritise the major cross boundary infrastructure –



Growth in the length and number of automobile trips has contributed to extensive construction of highways.

roads, transit, water and sewer systems that must be put in place over the next 30 years in order to achieve the new urban form described in the vision. Work on the Capital Project Requirements Plan will commence once there is a clear understanding of the urban form. It will be released for public comment prior to finalization.

FURTHER COMPONENTS

Meanwhile research, analysis and consultation will continue on the other components of the Strategic Action Plan such as the integration of Human Services into planning, as well as, the issues of economic vitality and financing. These other components of the plan will be prepared, circulated for public debate and implemented incrementally over the next few years.

PUBLIC INPUT

The Province welcomes any and all comments from those wishing to be involved in this process. If you require further information or wish to discuss your views, please call or write the Office for the Greater Toronto Area referencing this document.

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